



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

December 17, 2004

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Bob Taft
Governor, State of Ohio
77 South High Street
30th Floor
Columbus OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor Taft:

Thirty-four years ago this month, the first Clean Air Act signaled the beginning of our country's resolve to dramatically improve air quality. Today, we celebrate our accomplishments which have enabled us to breathe the cleanest air we have ever measured. As 2004 comes to a close, I am pleased to report that this has been a remarkable year for protecting and improving the country's air quality.

The Bush Administration has made implementation of a national clean air strategy a top priority by implementing more protective air quality standards for ozone and fine particles and designing national tools to help meet those standards. Legislation and regulation will be the centerpiece of the President's clean air and clean energy strategy as we move forward. Together, we are on the path to make this generation one of the most productive periods of air quality improvement in our nation's history.

An important part of our nation's commitment to clean, healthy air is reducing the levels of fine-particle or PM_{2.5} pollution. Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. These tiny particles, about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair, lodge deep in our lungs, and have been associated with heart attacks, chronic bronchitis, asthma attacks and missed days of school and work.

Key to the reduction of particle pollution is implementation of the fine particle standards and identification of the areas of the country needing additional work to meet the standards. We take the first of those important steps today, identifying the areas in your state that do not meet the fine particle standards. Those parts of your state designated as "nonattainment" will require more actions to achieve a common goal of cleaner, healthier air (a list of nonattainment areas is attached). For areas in your state that attain the standard you will need to continue your progress to sustain clean air.

To assist you, we have both proposed and instituted rules as part of our national clean air strategy that will bring the vast majority of the country into attainment with the standards over the next decade. Our clean air/clean energy strategy, including Clear Skies legislation and the Clean Air Rules, will cut power plant emissions of sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides and mercury by nearly 70 percent when fully implemented, and will reduce emissions from off-road diesel fuels, vehicles and engines by over 90 percent — those black puffs of exhaust smoke are going to be a thing of the past. Together, these Clean Air Rules will build on the tremendous progress made in previous decades, and do it in record time.

The last several decades have seen a growing commitment to clean air coupled with a progression of science and technology that has informed our decision-making and driven our actions. I think of our clean air history as a relay where a baton is passed from generation to generation and from Administration to Administration. This Administration has made a commitment to accelerate our clean air progress so that all Americans live healthier, longer, more productive and prosperous lives.

Sincerely,

/s/

Michael O. Leavitt

cc (with attachment):

Mr. Christopher Jones

Director

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Bharat Mathur

Acting Regional Administrator, Region V

Attachment

Nonattainment Areas

State	Area Name	Counties
Ohio	Canton–Masillon, OH	Stark
	Cincinnati–Hamilton, OH-KY-IN	Butler Clermont Hamilton Warren
	Cleveland–Akron–Lorain, OH	Ashtabula (P) Cuyahoga Lake Lorain Medina Portage Summit
	Columbus, OH	Coshocton (P) Delaware Fairfield Franklin Licking
	Dayton-Springfield, OH	Clark Greene Montgomery
	Huntington–Ashland, WV-KY-OH	Adams (P) Gallia (P) Lawrence Scioto
	Parkersburg–Marietta, WV-OH	Washington
	Steubenville–Weirton, OH-WV	Jefferson
	Toledo, OH	Lucas Wood

	Wheeling, WV-OH	Belmont
	Youngstown–Warrent–Sharon, OH-PA	Columbiana Mahoning Trumbull

(P) Partial county

